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TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [IT](#) [IZ](#) [NATO](#) [EUN](#) [IRAQI](#) [FREEDOM](#)

SUBJECT: IRAQ/ITALY - MOD/IDGS STUDYING ISF EMBEDDING
CONCEPT; SECRETARY'S ORAL MESSAGE DELIVERED; ITALY SUPPORTS
NATO LANGUAGE IN IRAQ CONFERENCE STATEMENT

REF: A. STATE 111092

[1](#)B. STATE 112917

[1](#)C. STATE 114212

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Scott Kilner, Reasons 1.4 B and D.

Summary

[1](#)1. (S) Ambassador discussed Engaging the Coalition message (Ref A) with DefMin Martino June 17; Army Attache and PolMilCouns, accompanied by UK counterparts, followed up with D/CHOD Castagnetti and MoD Diplomatic Advisor Amerio June 20. The Italians noted that while they would begin an internal GOI discussion of Ref A concept, the issue in Italy was highly political and linked to how Italian politicians decided to handle Iraq in connection with Italy's 2006 general elections. Martino said he would like to discuss the US ideas with SecDef when Martino is in the US, July 12-13. Given the highly political nature of Iraq issues, Castagnetti urged a "top-down" approach to garner political leaders' support before tasking military planners to work on it. He pointed out that in Italy's case, embedding in border patrol units or Iraqi special units would not be the purview of the MoD or IDGS, but that of the MoI, which oversees the Carabinieri, and SISMI, Italy's external intelligence service. We are also seeking appointments with the MFA and the PM's office to convey Ref A points.

[1](#)2. (S) Separately, Charge presented the Secretary's oral message on the Iraq Conference (Ref C) to FM Fini's Chief of Cabinet Massolo, and LaborCouns raised with MFA Iraq Office Director Maccotta June 20. Both said the Italian delegation to the Brussels Conference had no plans to meet with the Syrians. Massolo promised to convey the Secretary's oral message to FM Fini. Maccotta reported that Italy had strongly supported the UK on including NATO language in the Conference statement (Ref B). End Summary.

MNF-I Embedment Planning

[1](#)3. (S) On June 17, Amb. raised Ref A points on engaging the Iraq coalition with DefMin Martino. Martino said he would begin a conversation on Ref A concepts with the CHOD. He noted that the problem for Italy, with respect to Iraq policy, was not a military but a political one, and would be more intensely so in the run-up to Italian general elections in spring 2006. He said he thought PM Berlusconi would decide to continue the Italian deployment in Iraq into 2006 and would be anxious to discuss with the US a common approach to the future there. Martino said Italy would be happy to receive the US high-level delegation when it comes. He added that he would be in Washington, DC July 12-13 and would like to meet with SecDef to discuss Ref A at that time.

[1](#)4. (S) On June 20, Army Attache and PolMilCouns, accompanied by UK DATT, called on D/CHOD Gen. Castagnetti to go over Ref A points in detail. Gen. Castagnetti said IDGS would study the points, but at first glance, he was rather pessimistic about Italy's ability to embed in Iraqi units as envisioned in Ref A. That, he said, would require full synergy among the involved Italian authorities, and such synergy did not exist. Embedding Italians in border patrol or special operations units would not be a matter for the IDGS, he said, but rather for the Ministry of Interior, which has oversight of the Carabinieri, and for SISMI, Italy's external intelligence service. He stressed that SISMI was jealous of its turf, that relations between IDGS and SISMI were "not good," and that neither SISMI nor MoI would take instruction from IDGS.

[1](#)5. (S) Gen. Castagnetti pointed out that IDGS was providing the Iraqis with the help they were asking for in the form of advisors to the security ministries, but not in active units and not beyond Italy's area of responsibility, where Italians were not in the command and control chain. IDGS, he

continued, was helping the ISF build an Iraqi brigade, with one battalion almost formed. He asked rhetorically if we

knew the Iraqis well enough to embed with them and influence them from inside their own units. Finally, Gen. Castagnetti urged us to adopt a "top-down" approach in this matter, getting senior civilian leaders to agree first and then instruct the military and other agencies to cooperate in the planning. It would be hard, if not impossible, to plan something like this from the "bottom-up," he argued, implying that was what we were trying to do. We stressed that this was being handled at a very high level, that the Amb. had already spoken to the Defense Minister, and that we would be making this demarche with senior MFA officials and the PM's office, as well as following up with a high-level delegation from Washington.

¶6. (S) Also on June 20, PolMilCouns, accompanied by UK First Secretary, went through Ref A points with MOD Diplomatic

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Advisor Achille Amerio. Amerio said he had seen the report of the Washington briefing given to the Italian Embassy. One question that emerged was whether our proposal would require a new UN resolution. a new resolution, effectively providing the UN's blessing of the transition in coalition involvement, would significantly impact how Italian politicians handle the issue as Italian elections approach. Amerio said we should have no doubt about current Italian commitment, and thought Ref A approach made sense as an evolutionary one that built on the training now being done.

Iraq Conference: Italy Not Planning to Meet Syrians

¶7. (S) Charge presented the Secretary's oral message on the International Conference on Iraq (Ref C) to FM Fini's Chief of Cabinet Giampiero Massolo June 20. Massolo said the Italian delegation to the Brussels conference had no plans to meet with the Syrian delegation. Luigi Maccotta, MFA Iraq Office Director, told LaborCouns the same thing, adding that he had inserted language in Fini's draft speech saying that border crossings should be used to further commerce and tourism, not violence and terrorism.

Italy Supports NATO Language in Conference Statement

¶8. (C) Maccotta also said that Italy had strongly supported the UK within the EU on including a reference to NATO's role in supporting the ITG in the statement for the Iraq Conference. He noted Italian satisfaction that a compromise had been reached on Sunni participation in the Constitutional Convention, but cautioned that political success might increase insurgent attacks in the near term.

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